VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1
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2025

A new year a new volume...

Thank you for sticking around and if you're new here, welcome to The Rat Trap. I'll keep this one short and sweet. Thank you for all the love again and again...this wouldn't be anything without the beautiful people who make things worth making a zine over. It's been a long winter, and while the Rat Trap took a momentary holiday break, we hope we kept you warm with the January Interlude...hot, even. If you haven't gotten your hands on it, it's a collaboration with Lowell legend, Sludge. A smaller version than usual (think flash fiction) but nonetheless bold (think adult themes). In light of V Day we wanted to get personal with this edition. Expect some handwritten notes, neurotic ramblings and secrets from the community. As always, stay critical and wonderous xx

@therattrapmagazine

xx Anne Marie

Thank you to...

Iava Hohmann: artistic visionary
Alex Gonzalez Ale.xmakesart: cover
Megan McCarthy: photos
Lea Afonkin: visual art
Nate Foster: writer
Elodie Matte: poem, photos
Lekha Tevari: photos
Ben Conte: photos
Selena Guerrero: visual art
Connor Leno: visual art
Alexanderr.Online: paintings
Madailein Lindsay: writing
Shelby Morales: visual art
Jacob Babcok: writing
Violet Graves: writing

Lowell Writers Open Mic
1st Thursday of every month
6:30-8:00pm
Poets & storytellers welcome
Free to listen
Free to read
lala books
189 Market St
lalabookstore.com
LOWELL Writers
2/7 Koto Lowell The P.A.'s, Shivering Demons, The White Bear Principle, Piss Babies
2/7 Taffeta The Midnight Riders and Escape Durgin
2/8 Roscoe's EDM Night DJ Apparition, r.u.b.y, Sludgerronica, Dialog Talk
2/8 Tango's
2/8 House Project Oddie
2/16 Smokehouse Oddie
2/15 Tango's
2/15 Taffeta JVK, Burp., Roaches
2/15 Tori Town Stay at Home Dads
2/21 Valley
2/22 Roscoe's Tyrus Wilson Trio, Merlot, Prince T'Challa and the Royal Court, The Janeza Ensamble
2/22 Square Root Stay at Home Dads
3/1 Tango's
3/1 House Project Oddie, Nightvisions
2/8 Lala Books Lowell Celebrates Kerouac
3/14 Tango's
3/21 Tango's
3/21 Valley
COMEDY
W&W
GIFT CARD RAFFLE
SALE

UMass Lowell and Palestine - Ties to Genocide and How We Can Help
by Nate Foster

As the Lowell community settles into the New Year, millions suffer abroad as the Zionist project in Palestine continues to livestream genocide to an apathetic world audience. Multiple critical enablers of the Israeli occupation are present at UMass Lowell, one of the city's largest and most influential institutions. Supporters of Zionism at UML have so far been safe in continuing their murderous actions unchecked. Here's a brief description of who they are and how we can apply pressure to local Zionist activity.

Student activism has been at the forefront of Palestine activism in the U.S since October of 2023, with its principle demand being university divestment from Israel. UMass Lowell has numerous ties to the Zionist project, including partnerships with defense contractors, Israeli universities, and the U.S military. UML has a large working class demographic and hangs its hat on its STEM programs. This combination makes it easy for a partnered company like Raytheon to dangle a six-figure salary in front of students, enticing them to advance the U.S war machine in exchange for the ability to afford rising costs of living. The United States Army also contributes to the UML-to-military pipeline via DEVCOM SC, an R&D program based in Natick with the stated goal of "empowering America's soldiers today and in the future."

UML serves as a recruitment base for the Army through its HEROES initiative, a collaboration effort between UML and DEVCOM SC that funds military R&D to the tune of over $45 million in research expenditure since its establishment in 2013. The United States effectively treats Israel as its own satellite state and military outpost to exert economic control over the Middle East; America has sent over $158 billion in military aid to Israel since its inception in 1948, and $17.9 billion in the year after October 7th alone.

It is critical that UMass Lowell pulls funding and partnerships both directly from the Zionist project and from the U.S military-industrial complex at large. To stay updated on Palestine, it can be beneficial to shift media consumption to non-western outlets such as **Al Jazeera (@aljazeeraenglish on IG)** and **Mondoweiss (@mondoweiss)**. For UML students: keep an eye out for teach-ins and events held by groups on campus such as **UML SJP (@umlsjp)** and **Palestine Solidarity at UMass Lowell (@psatuml)**. Community members can get involved in local events and fundraisers through **Lowell for Palestine (@lowellforpalestine)**. Rallies, events, and organizations in Boston can be found through the **Boston Coalition for Palestine (@bostoncoalitionforpalestine)**. **The BDS movement (bdsmovement.net)** is a campaign that seeks to promote boycotts, divestments, and sanctions against Israel and affiliated entities.

Donate to a family in Gaza:

We must recognize the ongoing occupation of Palestine as an unacceptable reality, and work to bring about liberation by any means necessary. If you have yet to speak out about Palestine, find a way to do so however you can. Post something on social media, talk to a friend about it, join an organization, go to a demonstration. We are working against systems and structures that loom much larger than any of us as individuals, both in Lowell and worldwide. The only way forward is together.

FREE PALESTINE FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA

Have you ever looked into the eyes of an immortal? Have you ever felt your own existence leave you? When you left + came back, did you remember the moon pull? Do you suffer fools? Do they suffer you? Did you get here kicking and screaming? Do you know why you wanted to come? Did you tell anyone where you were going? Do they often listen to you? Do you believe in superstitions? Do you laugh when you get hurt because it is inevitable? Do you cry when you laugh too? The same way you cry when you inevitably get hurt? Can you hear a train where you live? Is it often on time? Is that what you use when you leave and come back? You ride the carousel wherever you are, you do it kicking and screaming but it's where you're supposed to be because YOU ARE WHERE YOU ARE BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BE.

release radar

The Whole Loaf single and first EP

You Could have Made this but you didn't by Its Your Friends

Super Punk Rock Yeah Yeah by Gross Girls

Electropes by Roaches

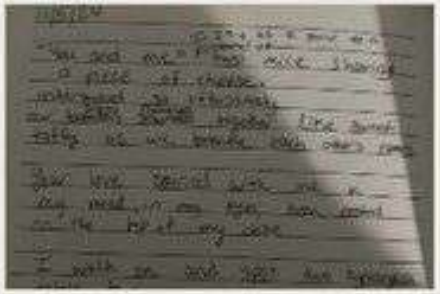
Girl, you're a dealer and I love it and Stars in your eyes by Ralph Priest and Sean Grow

A message from overseas...

"Hey!
Thought you might like some arty post-punk from three Brits living in Berlin. We've just released our debut album on FatCat Records, Be A Better Man"

I asked you to add your favorite love songs....

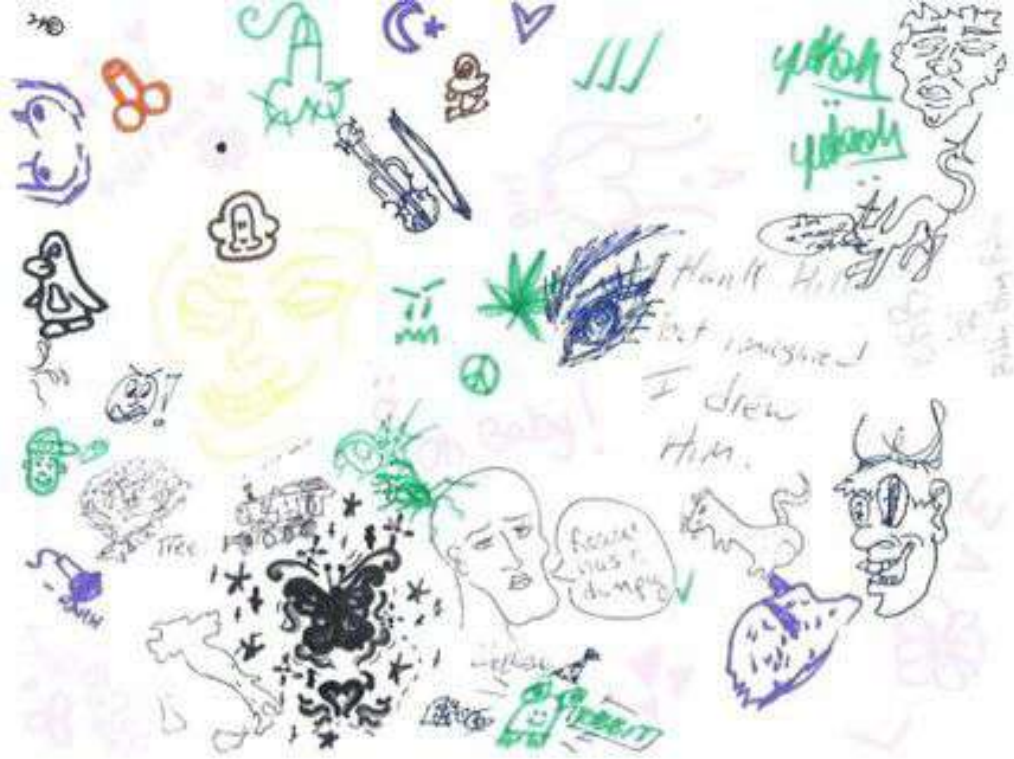
Lowell on Love



Relationship problem?
We got answers.

As a queer person (trans, asexual, lesbian, poly, etc.) I find myself feeling guilty about having crushes on others. It feels like an offense to feel any way about anyone, I don't want to give any unwanted attention. I know it isn't good, but I can't shake than feeling that myself specifically having a crush is harmful.

Shame and desire can often go hand in hand. One must decide if the guilt is worth being known and loved by another. In my opinion, love is always worth it. Try to remember that guilt is as human of an emotion as love is, often illogical and nonsensical. You must remind yourself that there is never anything harmful about your feelings towards another person, love in all its forms is a beautiful thing. Live and let love, freely.



I asked you to tell me a secret...

The Mill City Rises
by Elodie Matte

I see skies of fire dancing on clouds over the Merrimack
As the river's cool waters pour through the city's canals like blood

The city draws breath
Every sight holds beauty

Every moment holds the magnificence of rich history
Of deeper meaning and finer detail
I want to see it all

Every leaf of every tree tells a story of growth
From the bright joy of new life finding its roots in spring
To the rich glow that comes with age in autumn
There is life in beginnings and endings both

People hold mysteries
There is no one who lives without a story
Each one crafted from experience
Love and rage and tragedy and joy
Complexity woven through every moment

To capture just a moment in its full true grandeur would be amongst the greatest literary works of history

Where people are and where they were
I want to hang on every word
The great towers of industry abandoned
Shells now inhabited by a creature anew
The city built on bones of bricks

I can't help but think of the hands that laid each one
I want to know each of their names
I want to know what they had done
What they had thought
What they believed

I want to know the hidden secrets behind that mortar and clay

I want to see every stone
To know the time they took to form
To dream of the places they had been before
I want to feel every wood railing
I want to know their carpenters
I want to meet their trees
I want many things

I want to see joy dancing in the eyes of my community

I want them to know that they are valued
I want to see Lowell thrive
Joy is unrelenting love

The community of Lowell is truly wondrous
Even though the world can be scary
We will get through it

And I am glad to share a world will all of you

heres the truth about war, what they dont want you to know. its actually not an extension of the human heart but a faded painting the kind youd find in a shit gallery on 40th and barinG west philly i saw a h2 there once my boy snapped pics of me in front of it doing the peace sign with a cig hanging out my mouth. sorry for the smoke it keeps getting in my eyes, but who needs to see anyway i think im going blind. the world would be so much prettier from behind a prison cell. theres a hell in my body and im cutting it out with a pen really letting the ink seep into my blood. theres a poetry in that. do you think i can make it? as an angel i mean like not become famous i wouldnt do good with all that attention. i like it too much.

anyway hows the homie josh i heard he got up to some real weird shit recently like some real depraved shit. hes a freak just to say it. fifty dollars on him being the first of the gang to be arrested. cops dont mean shit man they cant hurt you just take the gun and start firing. two in the gut two between the eyes. i dont even know who makes the rules anymore. something about a penal code just gets me so morose.

i think if you put me in a room with hitler 2 id come out covered in my own blood but hey thats less for you. something ive been thinking a lot about lately is how the burn marks on (under?) my cracked skin havent really healed fully and its been almost ten years. 11 if you count when you put that cigarette out on the base of my neck cause you asked me to and i was in love with you so i said it was okay. but it wasnt okay and i knew that and you knew that. im picking half smoked butts up off the ground and polishing em off like nobody should go to waste. im an environmentalist in my mind. ya see, theres an inexplicable irreplaceable beauty inside me. i think its inside all of us. i am grasping it gently but with resolve. the world shifts lightly for me. i will swim in the pool of despair and ill hold my breath for as long as i can. count to 11 okay? now inhale the water. that burning sensation in your lungs? thats them filling with love probably. or maybe something a little more sinister. its best not to dwell on these things, and just drink deeply for as long as you can

violet graves

alexandrr.online

you shouldnt have done that but i told you it was okay

half bitten pills go down so easy when i take them with coffee at 11:26pm, but im just hiding them in my gums instead of swallowing. not like anyone is checking. im so up bro im more here than you could even imagine. what if we kicked it in the dark normal style? would you watch me die alone? ill let you have the aux. i promise not to writhe ill go so quiet an owl darts at a mouse you wont even see it coming. "wow youre sick huh?" yeah sick as fuck. got a little carried away there no worries tho right sorry lol im just a little bit of a chatterbox. ill shut up now but my phones ringing off the hook. can you get that for me?

my skins crawling theres bugs gnawing through my bones they want out. okay well here ya go little guys dont eat me up too fast im all you have remember? "for what its worth, the bugs are more scared of you than you are of them." wrong again fucker. they dont run from me, they dont try to hurt me at all— they just want to span time with me. i on the other hand have smashed their brains smoove out all over my wrist, didnt even care. hows it feel to know me? like really know me? im messing with my sleep cycles just feel something real. im so circadian with it. ill embellish just a little but you gotta promise not to spoil my fun. im soaking in the sun my skins blistering but man if it doesnt feel like home. theres something so peaceful about carcinoma. nine times out of ten i think ill really do it this time but the tenth time its just more of the same but its 11 remember so we will see.

that light is so bright man can you put that out? yeah its so dim in here now i can really focus. really concentrate on my heartbeat. im on fire im so monk coded i hate the vietnam war we shouldnt have done that but what can ya do ya know i wasnt even alive but tell you what if i was i woulda burned those fuckers in front of god and my own mother (same thing). why waste all that gasoline on you when theres heroic troops to immolate?

Zingers and Losers - My Year in Music
by jacob babcock

Beginning in 2017, I've kept a yearly list of every album I listen to in a given year, ranked in order of enjoyment. This list only accounts for albums that came out that year, since it seems unfair to pit new releases against established classics I'd yet to get around to. For example, I listened to more music in 2020 than presumably any other year, although I have no means of measuring this. Due in part to an obvious abundance of free time and a desperate bid to escape stagnation, I listened to 128 albums that came out in 2020, as well as at least 100 more that came out years prior. This is all to say that although I found Taylor Swift's *folklore* rather enjoyable, pitting it against Joni Mitchell's *Blue* (which I also heard for the first time in 2020) would be fair to neither Taylor nor Joni. As time has passed I've began to view these lists less as definitive rankings and more as archivals - monuments to moments both transformational and mundane. As far as years go, 2024 landed on the transformational end of the spectrum, not only for myself but for much of the music that led me, somewhat inelegantly, toward 2025's discontent. Amongst what was a truly spectacular year for music lay a handful of records that not only reached transcendence, but did so through a deep appreciation and understanding of the mundane.

Diamond Jubilee:
The first I heard of Cindy Lee's *Diamond Jubilee* was through RateYourMusic, a website people use to rate their music. Between the cover and what I was reading online, it seemed to filter classic brill building sonics through a modern hypnagogic lens, like The Ronettes performing at the Black Lodge. I listened to the majority of the record walking along a road connecting long stretches of apartment complexes, a route I had walked dozens of times. Yet, as the sun began to hang low over a view all too familiar, *Diamond Jubilee* ambled on, friendly yet otherworldly, melancholy yet triumphant, distant yet achingly and unflinchingly sincere. One day the right words will come to me - today will not be that day.

Manning Fireworks:
Indie kids have always loved heartfelt Americana - what better lens to filter country music's rawness through? Suddenly, you're no longer "above" caring; you understand that couplets about being bored at work or a little too drunk, when delivered with enough aching sincerity can stand head to head with the finest poetry. Many people, myself included, actively seek out beauty in the mundane - in the ways that the sun illuminates an abandoned warehouse on its way to bed, the light hitting in a way that could make you cry after a beer or two. It makes sense then, that my favorite song of the year was MJ Lenderman's *She's Leaving You*, a song about a guy who doesn't realize he sucks. Although the lyrics clearly paint a picture of a man succumbing to midlife stagnation, the music soars - after all, we all got work to do. Lenderman's transcendental normality lent necessary weight to moments where the ordinary didn't transcend but you kept moving anyways - what else can ya do?

Only God Was Above Us:
I don't try to be cool in the aloof, distant way, partially for spiritual reasons and partially because I'm a huge fan of Vampire Weekend. As much as I try to consistently seek out and engage with new things, I'll always keep a room made for the music that raised me, especially if that music is made by a 2000s indie darling. Although I am by all means young, hearing a band I can so precisely associate with moments spanning two decades grapple with the passage of time struck a chord. 2025 will be the first year since 2006 that I haven't been in school, which I guess makes me an adult - done with the frivolous anxieties of art school and onto the very real anxieties of insurance and job security. In many ways, few bands are better equipped to handle this than Vampire Weekend, who always sang about prep kids with the same world weariness they used to express real emotional distress. There's a moment on *Only God Was Above Us* where Ezra Koenig remarks that there's "a staircase up to nothingness inside your DNA" before delivering the following "well, that's a bleak sunrise" in a way that wrings comedy out of what would otherwise be utter despair. Over time the cruel becomes classical, much as I'm sure I'll one day long to return to 22 at the end of another long, long year.

got submissions?
Got gigs coming up? Wanna talk about your band? Do you make art, write or take pictures? Involved in community events?
Questions about your love life? Use google form & follow @theraltrapmaga zine on IG
Provided as a public service by your local dairy